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International study in the global south: linking institutional, staff, student and knowledge mobilities

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Abstract

The international mobility of institutions, staff, students and knowledge resources such as books and study materials have usually been studied separately. This paper, for the first time, brings these different forms of knowledge mobilities together. Through a historical analysis of South African HE alongside results from a quantitative survey of academic staff in three international branch campuses in South Africa, the paper suggests three things. First, it points to the importance of regional education hubs in the global South and their role in South-South staff and student mobilities. Second, it points to the importance of reading these mobilities as outcomes of historically attuned policy making—educational, migratory and political. Finally, the paper points to the theoretical possibilities that arise by bringing institutional, staff, student and knowledge resource mobilities in place and suggests new avenues for further research.

Keywords

transnational education; staff mobility; international students; student migration;
branch campus; South Africa

Introduction

Recent writings on academic migration have highlighted the role that mobility plays in producing knowledge (Madge et al. 2009, 2015; Raghuram 2013; Altbach 2015a; Faist and Bilecen 2015; Jöns 2015; Moufahim and Ming 2015). In a step forward from much of the existing literature they emphasise not only the extent to which institutions, students and academics are mobile but also the growing recognition of mobility's role in knowledge production and knowledge systems. They attempt, therefore, to switch attention from mobilities as exception to thinking of it, instead, as constitutive of knowledge systems.

At the same time, there is increasing recognition that students, like others, are also tethered through place attachments (Williams et al. 1992). For instance, students head for particular destinations (Beech 2014) because of shared culture (Singh et al. 2014), social relationships (Geddie 2013) and the draw of cultural life (Collins 2008). In doing so they critically engage with place and this has led researchers to move away from a reliance on rationalistic logic to understand and theorize mobility and migration of students (Findlay et al. 2012). As knowledge migrants such as students and academics are the ultimate 'rational subjects', it is unsurprising that rational explanations for their migration are sought. However, it appears that factors other than economic rationality are part of the narrative for student migrants globally.

As Madge et al. (2015) have argued there is little that brings together research on students and academics. Moreover, the content of knowledge and what is taught is also kept separate from most of the debates on academic mobility. Secondly, the places on which this vast (if fractured) literature on knowledge mobility has focused have—appropriately—been the premier destinations of students—USA, UK, Australia, Canada and to some extent New Zealand, the Anglo-American countries that dominate student migration (King and Raghuram 2013). There is some existing research on Asia as a destination for branch campuses but much less on other parts of the world. In particular, the

literature on Africa has been sparse outside the region and this paper contributes towards filling this gap. This paper focuses on how academics, students and knowledge come together. Finally, there is little work on how these are all emplaced through policy making and through the histories of place. This paper thus provides a historically sensitive lens on how academic work is a composite of changes in place.

Our research examines how staff, students and academic knowledges come together in places outside the global north. It explores the eduscape of branch campuses within the context of the South African higher education (hereafter, HE) environment and international mobility. South Africa provides an interesting context because it is an important provider of education not only for the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region but also for Africa as a whole. It has a reach well beyond its national boundaries. Moreover, South Africa has been riven with change in the last few decades. Shifting from the racist policies of apartheid has allowed it to become a centre for educational mobility in Africa. It has also consolidated and altered its higher education provision to try and overcome the limitations of apartheid education. This historical lens of policy making is crucial for understanding higher education in the country today as we will go on to show.

Using a quantitative survey, focusing on the experiences of the 'local' among academic staff at three transnational educational institutions (TNE) in South Africa, we aim to contribute to the literature on knowledge mobilities in its widest sense.

International study – mobile students, institutions and academics

Research on the internationalisation of higher education (HE) overwhelmingly focuses on *student* mobility (Ong 1999; Waters 2006; Wang et al. 2009; Waters and Brooks 2010).

International students are now firmly embedded in the neo-liberalisation projects of universities in much of the Anglo-American world. Within the context of higher education

budgets that have not kept up with the costs of education, the high fees charged to international students alongside their substantive numbers have helped to subsidise domestic higher education (Vossensteyn et al. 2013). They are, therefore, a key market, and also the acceptable face of migration. Students and sites in the south have become a major target for advertising campaigns and institutional marketing amongst countries jostling for the growing and highly lucrative student market (Bhandari and Blumenthal 2011; Brooks and Waters 2011). At the same time, international students, with their distinctive learning experiences and language expertise, have also been seen as posing pedagogic challenges (see Coate 2009, Song 2016 and for critiques). Seen as a special case, and often lumped together as a group, international students' learning is viewed primarily through a deficit model (see Madge et al. 2015 for a critique). Hence, an often separate but important set of debates have also arisen around the pedagogical 'issues' raised by international study (McEldowney et al. 2009).

For some countries internationalisation through student intake has gone hand-in-hand with transnational educational projects where the *institution* moves some of its teaching abroad. The establishment of branch campuses, cross-accreditation schemes and franchising have been central to the so-called 'second phase' of the globalisation of education (Shams and Huisman 2011; Knight 2012). The replication of university infrastructures, courses and sometimes even of buildings abroad provides prospective students with in-situ global education (Feng 2013). This is particularly apparent in the Chinese case where joint ventures with UK institutions, for example, have led to a large influx of students from within the wider region who have to come to China to obtain a British qualification, while enjoying a Chinese experience. These universities exemplify a rupture between the language of education (English), the type of study and the place-based pull factors (Xiang and Shen 2009) usually associated with international education (McNamara and Knight 2014). Students are able to access a 'UK degree' in English, for

instance, but with far less costs and without the disruption of international travel (Waters and Leung 2013). Hence, the issue of location and the surety of traversing of national boundaries that is often assumed in studies of international student mobility is made much more complex in the case of transnational education. The 'international' seeks instead to operate as a brand, to assure students of global quality. However, as Waters and Leung (2013) point out, the degrees awarded and the quality of education do not necessarily bear the hallmarks of quality and of human and cultural capital often associated with the term 'international'. They may, in fact, be seen as offering a second chance to those who do not qualify for high-quality, low cost national educational provision.

There is a much smaller, but largely separate literature on the mobility of *academic staff* (Teichler 1996; Jöns 2007; Kim 2009, 2010; Leung 2012). Conference attendance, periods of fieldwork, library and archival visits, laboratory visits, fellowships are all part of, perhaps even essential to the knowledge creation in which academics are engaged (Jöns 2008; Ackers 2010). These different forms of mobility provide networking opportunities but are also foundational in learning. Longer-term movements of a few years are, in addition, seen as central to enhancing research careers, as Kuvik (2015) argues with regard to biotechnology academics and industry professionals. Science careers, in particular, are often dependent on this mobility (Ackers 2005). Finally, there has been a long history of permanent movement of academics (Kim 2009). Some academics may move as students and then climb up the academic hierarchy to establish research and teaching careers while others migrate once they have established themselves within academia. Given the significance of mobility to the building of academic careers (Ackers 2005), for accruing the knowledge (Raghuram 2013), social networks (Jöns 2008; Fahey and Kenway 2010; Bauder 2015) and the cosmopolitanism that is widely valued in education (Caruana 2014), the extent and nature of academic mobility is not surprising.

Moreover, students, academics and institutions are not the only mobile actors in global education. Their movements are accompanied by and embedded in other forms of mobility and locatedness— a wide field of *knowledge objects and players* (Raghuram 2013). For instance, the books used, prospectuses, agents and recruiters, university managerial staff all move to facilitate or at least make possible international study (Findlay et al 2017). Moreover, a number of objects and their place-based specificities too define international study—access to libraries, to laboratories, to archives, fieldwork sites, to supervisors and mentors all populate the world of circulating academic knowledges and there is little recognition of how these too are significant to the production of mobilities (for an exception, see Jöns 2007). It is only by understanding the place of mobility in producing knowledge that the movement of individual students and academics as well as institutions can be understood.

There is very little research that brings all these three strands of literature on student, academic and institutional mobilities together. As Madge et al. (2015) argue if we are to understand the complex eduscape of global education, it is imperative that we move beyond fragmented understandings of knowledge mobilities and instead embrace the wide range of movements and immobilities that are inherent to education. The spatialities of education (Forstorp and Mellström 2013; Raghuram 2013) with its own place-specific features and attachments as well as its circulations must be understood if we are to decentre international students (in particular) as exceptions in the landscape of knowledge circulations.

The geographies and histories of international study

There are specific geographies that are emphasised in the literatures on international study in its various forms. While there is a vast literature on student migration, dominant debates have, appropriately, focused on the significant flows of students from south to north or east

to west, flows which dwarf other patterns of mobility. There is also growing recognition of student migrants who move to regional hubs, most notably to Asian countries such as Singapore and Malaysia (Collins 2013; Sidhu and Christie 2014). Academic institutions and branch campuses inherently reverse these geographies as they aim to limit the flows of students by situating the campuses in students' home countries or regions (OECD and World Bank 2007; Kapur and Crowley 2008; Knight 2013). Yet, the extent to which they are successful is debatable as transnational education may be a stepping stone to mobility both for domestic students and within the wider region (Levatino 2015). Academic mobilities are much more geographically dispersed. Although there is a history of viewing academic mobility through the theoretical lens of brain drain (Altbach 2015b) and its attendant south-north, east-west spatialities, in more recent years there is far greater recognition of circulation as the mode of being an academic and hence a broader range of directions of travel have been researched (Hammett 2012; Jöns 2015).

Branch campuses also have other geographies. They increasingly target international students although they have to compete with more established Western campuses as students appear to prioritise ranking, quality of programmes and reputation as determinants of where to study (Wilkins and Huisman 2011). Interestingly, Wilkins and Huisman's (2011) study of students at a branch campus in the Middle East suggests that the meaning of place is much more ambiguous. Student choice may be based on the reputation of the main campus (Wilkins and Huisman 2013), not on the location of the campus itself. Hence, the brand name of the parent institution and the subtle qualities that make up campus life are sometimes seen, oddly enough, to transcend the particularities of the physical location where the campus is located.

While the mobility of students, academics and of institutions focuses on particular directions of movement and sites of mobility, there are also wider concerns about how international study is shaped by forces of globalisation. Trends such as the growing

importance of international university rankings, the mobility of students and the establishment of transnational educational patterns alongside the discursive authority of the 'internationally recognised degree' have led to a sense that HE is becoming a homogenised space. It is largely accepted that this is part of the globalisation in educational provision (Knight 2012, 2015). The dominance of English as the medium of instruction in TNEs, irrespective of the language of the home country, suggests that an increase in actors involved in TNE is leading to 'more of the same' rather than to differentiated patterns and a variety of forms of education. Critics argue that this globalisation has taken the form of academic imperialism with the major economic powers, who were, on the whole, also significant players in the colonial system, yet again reaping the benefits (Razak 2012). For others, universities in the global south have always been globalised through the language of instruction—usually those of colonial powers (Tefferu 2005) and through mimicking the academic structures of Europe (Mok 2007; Deem et al. 2008; Mohammedbhai 2009). For instance, in the African context they embody the history and legacy of colonialism set up in the continent by the British through the Asquith Commission in 1943-44 and by the French in the Brazzaville meeting of 1947 to create a small cohort of educated elites in their own image to run the colonies (Mamdani 2008). The shape, offerings and structure of universities and degree programmes in the global south therefore often mirror that of European universities, initially following colonial relationships but increasingly attuned to the dominance of Anglo-American patterns of education. Globalisation of education, according to these arguments, may as well be called Westernisation.

Yet, this has been matched by an increasing number of policy initiatives to foster a much stronger regional identity within the space of international study. For example, co-operative policies such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) protocol of education and training offer free movement in order to help foster a regional academic community leading to significant regional alignments (McLellan 2009; SADC 1997). The

African Union Strategy for Harmonization and its legal instrument, the Arusha convention, aim to bring harmonisation to the curricula (through the Tuning approach), foster quality compatibility and improvement (African Quality Rating Mechanism) and increase the mobility of staff and students within the continent. Similar patterns can be seen across many regions albeit with varying degrees of effectiveness. Most advanced has been the Bologna harmonisation process in Europe although in recent years competitiveness has increasingly replaced social dimensions of regionalisation, particularly since the global economic downturn of 2008 (Holford 2014). The advanced state of the Bologna process has meant that it has become a model for regional mobility (Hartmann 2008).

Regional trends have also been fostered because of attempts to *emplace* students. In the highly politicised arguments around migration, even international students have become victims of rising anti-immigration feeling (see for example, Neilson 2009). Although there is a dominance of the Anglo-American or the European model in international education, vast numbers of students are from the global south. As a result, there is increasing attention on ways of actualising the lucrative international student market while retaining them within the global south itself, a solution also backed by some of the sending countries seeking to retain their students (Rye 2014). Branch campuses have been one of the key elements in the arsenal of solutions (Wilkins and Huisman, 2013). A number of regionally-led initiatives also aim to foster regionalisation in order to address shared regional challenges. One example is the University of Stellenbosch's Partnership for Africa's Next Generation of Academics (PANGeA), a collaborative network between leading African universities that aims to increase research capacity within the region (Cloete et al. 2015). Moreover, cross-regional networks are also forming in order to address the very small proportions of people entering higher education in Africa. For instance, the Africa Australia University Network founded in 1978, aims to strengthen partnerships between universities on the two continents.

Within this context of the internationalisation of higher education in the global south, a number of regional hubs are prominent—Brazil, Cuba, Kenya, Egypt, Russia and, in Africa, Kenya, Nigeria, Egypt, Ghana and South Africa as the focus of this study. These regional hubs are hosting increasing numbers of students—in part due to similarities in culture and reduced travel costs (Bhandari and Blumenthal 2013). Development of these regional hubs has become part of national plans for higher education. These hubs also attract branch campuses, the focus of our study.

Methodology

This paper explores the geographies and histories of knowledge mobility by examining institutional, staff, student and knowledge mobility. Towards this it draws on a survey of staff at three international branch campuses in South Africa conducted in June and July 2014. Eighty-six full time academic staff members were employed at these institutions. Using a simple random sampling technique, a total of fifty of these staff members were selected and a structured questionnaire administered (58% of the total with a response rate of 71%). The questionnaire asked both closed and open ended questions with the answers captured and analysed to provide insight into the behaviours and perceptions of staff on these international campuses. Thirty percent of staff were employed as junior lecturers, 44% as lecturer, 22 % as senior lecturer. The responses suggest that there are very few professorial staff (just 2% in our survey) at these universities. Eighty-eight per cent of the staff were employed on full-time contracts and 72% on permanent ones. Twenty-two per cent of the staff interviewed were in the social sciences and 56% in management, reflecting the key disciplinary thrusts of these campuses. Twelve per cent were teaching IT and 10% in other programmes. 56% of staff were employed in undergraduate teaching, 32% in Honours and 12% at the Masters level with staff teaching at the postgraduate level also required to teach at the undergrad level. Fifty-eight percent of staff interviewed were women. In the

South African context the issue of race is also often central: 52% classified themselves as African; 38% as white with almost equal numbers for Indians and coloureds. The staff at these universities are overwhelming young with 38% aged between 20 and 30 and 60% between 30 and 40. We only interviewed one staff member outside of these two age cohorts and they were over 60. These figures suggest that these universities lack a middle-grade of staff who can become future leaders in the HE sector.

The South African case is particularly distinctive. South African universities are 'selling' access to internationally recognised degrees in a global context (see Table 1). South African institutions dominate the top-ten ranked universities in Africa and feature in the top ranking universities in the world. This has meant that regionally, South Africa is seen as a global hub of excellence in HE and hence recruits significant numbers of international students from within the region. This reputation is a selling point for many institutions, with the universities' ranking featuring prominently in their marketing strategies. Here, global presence (through rankings) is used to gain regional importance (via student numbers). South African higher education also explicitly aims to attract international students from within the region in part to facilitate development there (NPC 2011, 2012; DHET 2013). The dominance of South Africa's institutions in SADC, the regional governance structure consisting of 13 southern African states, and the fact that 5% of places at South African universities are reserved for students from the SADC region, have led to significant mobility of international staff, students and branch campuses to the country, thus contributing to the internationalisation of its higher education sector (Dzvimbo and Moloi 2013; Lee and Schoole 2015).

Thus, despite talks about globalisation, there still remains an architecture and history of localism that shapes HE. This eduscape is present in every HE context and is particularly unique in the South African context. The linking back to this eduscape is vital in understanding the local in the internationalisation of HE. Without this local context, it is

difficult to distinguish the offerings of institutions that have branch campuses.

Contextualising the case study eduscape within South Africa demonstrates why the internationalisation of HE is fraught with problems, as the country grapples with its own historical legacy while coming to terms with its role as a regional HE hub.

Please insert Table 1 here

The South African higher education system

Before the end of apartheid, South Africa's higher education system was divided into three separate sectors, all of which were publically funded: six white-only Afrikaans institutions, four white-only (with a few notable exceptions) English institutions and 'homeland' institutions. During apartheid, four centrally managed universities for 'Africans' were established, one each for 'Indians' and 'Coloureds' and four universities that were located in the former 'independent homelands' for African students. Additionally, there were seven technical colleges or technikons (also divided by language) for whites, seven of which were historically black, one distance education technikon, and a large distance education university (Pinheiro et al. 2012). Even within this context, South African institutions acted as a regional educational hub. Many of the 'homeland' universities attracted African and SADC students who went on to become presidents of their respective countries—Robert Mugabe, Kenneth Kaunda, Julius Nyerere, Seretse Khama, and Yusuf Lule. In effect, they became the outposts of the colonial project of training the next generation of elites and leaders in the continent. South Africa's primary role was therefore to disseminate through teaching.

This regional notability of international students in South Africa is only part of the picture; apartheid also prevented the marketization of international education. The lifting of apartheid saw huge increases in international students numbers from 12,557 in 1994 to 66,119 in 2010 (Fongwa 2010). Despite the influx of foreign students, HE in South Africa

post-apartheid was poorly co-ordinated, with under investment in the ‘homeland’ universities best being summed up by Mamdani:

‘Black universities coming out of apartheid were the intellectual counterparts of Bantustans [separate areas set aside for black people]. They were designed to function as detention centres for black intellectuals [rather] than as centres that would nourish intellectual thought. As such, they had little tradition of intellectual freedom or institutional autonomy.’ (Mamdani, 2009, oral address as quoted in Andersson 2010, 259)

Hence, the primary aim of the post-1994 reform—achieving equality—may be said to have had only limited success. The state of HE prompted a massive transformation of the sector, aligning it to international best practice in the sector. The aim of this reconfiguration was to help the sector become more responsive to the needs of the growing economy and society in a democratic society and to structure the sector to compete in a globally competitive environment. The public university sector was merged into three tiers of institutions, as seen in Table 2: research universities (of which there are eleven), comprehensive universities (six) and universities of technology (six).

Please insert Table 2 here

Within these tiers, HE student numbers have grown by 60% since 1994, and an increasingly large proportion of these students originate from outside the country. Table 3 shows that the largest cohort of foreign students stem from SADC countries. One reason for this is that due to the Protocol on Education (SADC 1997) SADC students fees are charged at local levels. South Africa may hence be seen as a regional educational hub. Outside of this

classification were the mega open distance university of South Africa, as well as branch campuses and private universities. While the former attempts to provide equitable education for the many, especially the disadvantaged, branch campuses and private institutions are perceived to be elite and expensive.

Please insert Table 3 here

While there are significant and growing numbers of international students at South African HE institutions, their influx has been concentrated into relatively few institutions. This is due to the historical legacy of apartheid, with well-funded, previously white-only universities having excellent staff, facilities and reputations. It is noteworthy that all institutions with the highest overall foreign student numbers (Table 4) were previously 'white-only' institutions and two of the institutions, Stellenbosch University and the University of Pretoria, had Afrikaans as the language of instruction during the apartheid period. These universities are also some of the highest ranked institutions on the continent and draw a large cohort of African students, despite the potential language barrier. The international nature of HE has necessitated both institutions to offer classes in English as well, yet they are loathe to forgo Afrikaans as a language of instruction despite political and market pressure (Mabokela 2001; Hurst 2015)

Please insert Table 4 here

Institutional mobility - branch campuses in South Africa

In the global context, South Africa may not rank significantly as an international HE provider, but regionally, and specifically in SADC, it is seen as the major international player and is attracting both regional staff and students (Adepoju 2003). The most internationally

recognised South African universities recruit offshore, but branch campuses primarily market themselves in neighbouring SADC. They follow global trends in drawing on the high rankings of their mother campuses to draw in students but they do so within the context of high unemployment rates within the SADC region. Together, the internationally ranked universities and the handful of branch campuses have placed South Africa as the regional hub in Africa.

There is a proliferation of branch campuses, across the global south. Recognised university brands have exported their names, curriculum and at times even their staff to attract a growing demand for international education. This is often a strategic decision by universities to export their brand to tap into a global demand for branded education, although the rationale for exporting the brand or establishing the branch campus may be narrated as one of 'outreach' or providing quality education to other regions. The for-profit nature of many of these campuses means that they are positioned to reap financially from these engagements (Altbach and Knight 2007)

Post-apartheid, many international universities looked to the emerging HE market in South Africa as a site for establishing branch campuses. With the huge demand for education and a significant lack in capacity by local universities, the country became a ripe market for such campuses. Between 1999 and 2011, six branch campuses had opened in the country, mostly offering business degrees and MBAs. These campuses attracted a small proportion of the HE market by growing both student numbers and course offerings (Daniel et al. 2005).

This growth of branch campuses seemed to prompt the South African government into action. There was a fear from the executive within the Department of Education that branch campuses were offering inferior qualifications and thus a change of legislation and review of qualifications was instigated (Cosser 2002). This process led to a number of branch campuses being denied accreditation of the MBA program, and four of the six branch

campuses of the country left the country shortly afterwards. It was reported that these campuses felt that they could not be profitable in South Africa without offering the lucrative program and no longer wanted to invest in other programs in the country.

In 2004/2005, the South African government sought to restructure the HE landscape to consolidate and realign the system that was inherited from apartheid. This entailed merging a number of historical black universities with historical white universities so as to balance the skills and resources of different institutions. Post the 2004/2005 restructuring of HE in South Africa, the country was left with three branch campuses, one from Australia, one from the Netherlands and a business school from the UK. These campuses together play a very small role in the South African eduscape as they do not have large student numbers. Nevertheless, they do demonstrate the attractiveness of the environment to foreign institutions. These institutions offer an internationally recognised degree, which they use as one of the main marketing tools to attract students.

The three current branch campuses in South Africa at which our survey was conducted were: Monash South Africa, Stenden University and the Henley Business School. Monash South Africa was established in 2001 in Johannesburg. The Australian main campus has invested approximately \$130 million in the campus and recently sold 50% of the campus to the Laureate Group, an international company that manages 85 university campuses globally. Its current degree offerings comprise of the Bachelor of Social Science, Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Information Technology. It also has campuses in Australia (the main campus) and Malaysia. Stenden University with campuses in the Netherlands (the main campus), Qatar, Thailand and Bali, established a branch campus in Port Elisabeth, South Africa, in 2002. Its degree offerings are the BBA in Disaster Management and B.Com in Hospitality Management. Henley Business School set up a branch campus in 2008 in Johannesburg. It offers an MBA and executive non-degree programs. The Henley Business

School has 16 branch campuses across the globe; the main campus is at the University of Reading in the UK.

All three institutions have other international campuses and it is clear that the institutions therefore have an international focus. This international context will now be contextualised within South Africa by looking at the international nature of the course offerings of the universities and the international nature of the academic staff.

Staff mobility

While there is often the perception that branch campuses have an international perspective that local campuses do not offer, this does not resonate with branch campuses in South Africa. Many of the staff and students are local although there is certainly a link to the international main campus. South African and SADC nationals dominate the educational teaching staff: 42% of branch campus staff were born in South Africa, with a further 36% in SADC. A total of 78% of staff at these global north institutions were therefore born locally. This local nature of the staff was further confirmed by the finding that 86% of staff at the branch campuses had obtained their first degree in South Africa (36% at the same campus). Only 2% had obtained their first degree from outside Africa and this figure rose to 6% for highest qualification. There is, therefore, a very localised, internalised process of academic reproduction in what is certainly the most global of structures within South African HE. A branch campus, which recruits locally, will recreate the global homogeneity of the HE curriculum with a local nuance. This becomes the definition of the eduscape—a global homogenous system that is still embedded in local particularities.

Yet, locally trained and educated staff may still have international exposure and experience that would manifest in the internationalisation of teaching and research of branch campuses. In many branch campuses across the world, main campus staff teach at the international campuses (Altbach 2013) but this was not so in South Africa. As stated

earlier, most staff belonged within the SADC region and had been trained there. In fact, being a student at the university was given as the single primary reason that staff joined the university. For a number of the others, the opportunity to work with their previous supervisors, the draw of an international brand, good salaries and the opportunity to be near home were important.

While most research has focused on the causes for mobility, we have also explored forms of academic engagement and how TNE staff participated in the world of mobile knowledges. According to our survey, 22% of academics at branch campuses in South Africa had worked on international projects (either teaching or research); of these, 7% had worked on projects with academics on the main campus. Overall, 78% had no regular contact with international partners and only 14% had participated in international writing collaborations; 22% had travelled to international conferences regularly, while for the rest of the academic staff there was little or no exposure to these sorts of networking events or opportunities for academic exchange. Only a small proportion of academic staff had been taught by foreign lecturers or had come into contact with foreign guest lecturers.

The picture with regard to the main campus was, however, slightly different. All staff had visited the main campus at least once and most (over 90%) had also been to other branch campuses of the university by which they were employed. 82% had visited the main campus once while the rest had been twice. Yet, despite these numerous visits, very few formal projects have materialised between academics of the academics of different campuses of the same institution. This could be due to the stringent requirements for registering and moderating HE content set out by the South African government. It appears that there is certainly a level of autonomy in the branch campus that was not previously envisioned.

As shown above, while the branch campuses market themselves as international institutions, linked to the main campus, and attract students with the offering of an

internationally recognised degree, local academics have limited exposure to international contexts beyond a visit to the main campus. Few have sustained intellectual partnerships with staff abroad and the course content was local.

However, given the international nature of the South African HE offerings, staff who have qualified in the country should be able to uphold the international standards set out by the main campus. Yet, despite the reputations of the branch institutions in the country, these campuses struggle to attract and retain qualified academic staff. Of the employed academics at the campuses, 34% had PhDs with none of the branch campus graduates, who worked as academics, having obtained PhDs. This points to a number of institutional barriers that the government has placed on branch campuses, most notably, that branch campuses in South Africa cannot call themselves universities. While they may offer accredited degrees and diplomas, no branch campus has the course offerings or the required infrastructure to be given permission to be registered as a university in South Africa. This has significantly lowered the status of these institutions in the country. Academics working there are denied opportunities to apply for national research funding as this is reserved for universities and research centres, not for HE providers.

The political and legislative frameworks that have shaped this eduscape have thus made it difficult for branch campuses to establish themselves as desirable employers in South Africa. However, the international nature of their offering is still appealing to students, and the brand recognition of these institutions—despite the under qualification of academic staff—still makes them viable.

Student Mobility

At Monash, the student records show that 47% of the students were South African, 30% from SADC, 13% from other regions in Africa and 10% from the rest of the world. This increase in South African students is a recent phenomenon, as in the initial set up stages of

the campus, the vast majority of students were from the SADC region, with a large cohort of students being on a government bursary from Botswana (MU 2005).

This initial student intake has left a perception that the branch campuses attracted a lot of international students, although the figures suggest that these proportions were not that different from the ratios for the staff. There were slightly more foreign staff from within the SADC region than among students so that these branch campuses have played a regional role rather than a national one. This differs from public universities, where the vast majority of both students and academics are South African. Hence, these organisations, like other South African institutions, form an important hub for regional higher education.

We did not undertake a student survey but the staff survey on student perceptions suggests that the international brand is most meaningful for those within SADC and through the rest of Africa. Staff perception is that their international brand is less significant for South African students. This could be due to a number of factors. First, due to the relatively high ranking of South African institutions, students do not always look abroad for quality education, which has created a poor brand awareness by South African students of foreign institutions (Berriane 2009). Secondly, the higher costs of studying at a branch campus may put off local students who receive subsidies to study at South African institutions. However, the lower entry requirements, entry via an additional foundation year and lack of application fee make this an attractive option for struggling students.

On the other hand, students from the rest of the world were seen to have a global outlook with 32% of staff supporting that view. The international branding of a university from the global north is an important reason why both SADC and other foreign students choose to study at the branch campuses.

Other Mobilities in a World of Knowledge

The section above provides some quantitative data from our survey of academics employed in branch campuses in South Africa. However, the questionnaire also sought the views of staff on a range of other topics and below we highlight some of the other forms of circulation that have shaped institutional, staff and student mobility. In particular, the survey points to the complexity of place in international study. For instance, the subject content learnt by academic staff seemed to depend on the discipline. For example, one philosophy lecturer mentioned that they were schooled in European philosophy while another said that along with this they were also exposed to African and postcolonial authors and texts. There has been very little research thus far that explores how the subject itself shapes mobilities (Lane 2011). The limited research that exists has primarily explored mobilities in the context of STEM (Cantwell 2011; for exceptions, see Jöns 2007; Coey 2017) and so this is a subject worthy of further study.

For others, mobilities and immobilities centred around textbooks and fieldwork. Many talked about how their education was local. Fieldwork was for most people—staff and students—a local experience unlike in northern countries where there is a lot of fieldwork abroad. Some staff also mentioned access to world class laboratories as a reason for joining branch campuses. Clearly, it was not only staff, teaching and books but also standards (the quality of the labs) that could be marked up as international.

Textbooks were sometimes international but many either studied local textbooks or had the textbooks adapted to local issues. This is, however, a changing scenario. Originally, in Monash the course content was actually passed on from the main campus, but this policy was withdrawn in 2010 and much more autonomy was given to staff amidst criticisms of the relevance of the teaching material that is sent for local students. These different foreign influences were neither straightforwardly embraced nor rejected but as in the case of the curriculum, too much input from the main campus was felt as a way of colonizing education.

As stated by one of the respondents 'What works in Australia [main campus] doesn't always work here'. The relationship between education providers and the nation was thus altering dynamically as the rules of the South African government and those running the main campus changed. This changing dynamic is not only influenced by local actions. The decision in 2013 by Monash University to sell the Monash South Africa Campus to the Laureate Group will further change the nature of this branch campus. It is still unclear how the international nature of the campus will alter now that it is managed by an international consortium, yet educational offerings remain situated in local contexts.

One of the deeply contextualising factors in South Africa is the embedding of community engagement as a core part of the mission of universities. After the White Paper on the Transformation of Higher Education (DHET 1997), universities are deemed responsible for local development. Thus, universities became increasingly involved in local agendas. This social mission is unique to an almost entirely public system and adds another layer of localising impetuses that a branch campus does not face. In South Africa, branch campuses therefore realign the place attachments of universities to their communities.

However, other universities and their students have to negotiate these deeply localising influences alongside a world in which people, things, money and brands move unequally to produce forms of international study. For instance, these pressures to be locally relevant run alongside the desire to internationalise and to gain status in international ranking systems—an issue that is debated and contested in South Africa. For example, the University of Johannesburg, a new institution, established through mergers in 2006, came out very vocally against university rankings of universities in the global south. It cited the need for these universities (including itself) to focus on the developmental needs of their wider geographical contexts and not become obsessed with the ranking system, as many institutions had done in the global north. However in 2012, the university was ranked within

the top 4% of global universities by the QS. The criticism of the ranking system ended and now the fact that the institution is ranked is a major part of the marketing of the university.

The political economies that shape the different forms of mobility within the eduscape of South Africa are not only influenced by the mobility of academics and students, there is instead a mix of mobilities of books, staff, students, resources, ownership and identities which together bear influence on the institution. Importantly, these eduscapes are produced through the active negotiation between mobile campuses and the constantly changing dynamics of the HE context. The mobility of people is only part of the mobilities and immobilities that shape eduscapes.

Conclusion

Mobility is important for developing academic careers, knowledge building and the reach of educational institutions (Raghuram 2013). As a result, student and academic staff mobility have been the subject of much recent attention. However, there has been little work that brings together these different forms of mobilities along with institutional mobility in the context of a single country. Moreover, much of the literature on global educational mobility has been slanted towards certain regions – Europe, Australia, North America and more recently Asia. These educational hubs may be considered to be part of a large homogenised ‘international’ English HE experience. Within this work on the English-language-based HE experience, there is much less research that explores mobility in the context of Africa. This is an important lacuna as although not all of the continent functions in the English HE tradition, a substantial part, particularly in southern Africa, stems from the British educational system and its local manifestation within the African context (Pietsch 2013). This paper thus contributes to the understanding of global mobilities within the eduscape outside of the global north.

The South African case is particularly interesting as it acts as a conduit for a variety of influences. From the historical context of the local and imperial educational environment (Pietsch 2013) to the influences of current policy, the international branded branch campuses are forced into a context that immediately localises their nature. This localisation is obvious in the survey conducted with academic staff in the campuses in South Africa because it is evident that these branch campuses primarily served as regional educational hubs in Africa. The South African context as host for international branch campuses points to how the mobility of academic staff, students and ideas within the global system of HE are not as unrestricted as the 'international degree' would suggest. The offerings of branch campuses are contorted to fit into the structures over which it has no control. In doing so, it suggests some of the complexities of place that are inherent to the production of international eduscapes. It also suggests further avenues for research.

First, in moving beyond the global north as site for this study, this paper suggests the varied ways in which the global south is also positioned in international study. The importance of the rising powers and their regional role is particularly highlighted. Do regional powers act as conduits for certain varieties of internationalisation and what are the limits they face? What are the specific questions that are faced in African higher education as it intersects with internationalisation?

Second, the paper urges researchers to think about the complex histories of international study as emergent through a mixture of policy making—educational, migratory and political in the broadest sense. It suggests that a complex spatio-temporal lens is required to understand the complexities of international study.

Finally, by bringing together multiple mobilities is an important manoeuvre if we are to stop treating any single form of mobility as either exception or causality. The interplay between these different forms of mobility lay the ground for student experiences but also provide the landscape of HE in many countries. Yet, very often either one or two variables

are often chosen as the key mobilities for analysis. This paper opens the way for asking what might a more complex international study involve and what tools are required in order to understand these multiple mobilities and immobilities? It also highlights the need to go explore and tie in how mobility is understood and explored across disciplines, what is taught and how it is taught. These are increasingly pressing questions in the South African context where the desire to decolonise knowledge is gaining ground. No studies of international study can afford to ignore this in the future.

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Table 1: QS Ranking of South African universities

Source: QS 2015.

Table 2: The pre and post-2004/2005 merger universities in South Africa

Pre-merger institution	Post-merger institution
	Traditional Universities
University of Cape Town	University of Cape Town
University of Fort Hare	University of Fort Hare
University of the Free State	University of the Free State
University of Pretoria	University of Pretoria
Rhodes University	Rhodes University
University of Stellenbosch	University of Stellenbosch
University of the Western Cape	University of the Western Cape
University of the Witwatersrand	University of the Witwatersrand
University of Natal	University of KwaZulu-Natal
University of Durban-Westville	
Medical University of South Africa	University of Limpopo
University of the North	
University of Bophuthatswana	North-West University
Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education	
	Comprehensive Universities
University of South Africa	University of South Africa
University of Zululand	University of Zululand
University of Venda	University of Venda
Rand Afrikaans University	University of Johannesburg
Vista University	
Technikon Witwatersrand	

University of Port Elizabeth	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
Port Elizabeth Technikon	
Border Technikon	Walter Sisulu University
Eastern Cape Technikon	
University of Transkei	
	Universities of Technology
Technikon Free State	Central University of Technology
Durban Institute of Technology	Durban University of Technology
Mangosuthu University of Technology	Mangosuthu University of Technology
Vaal Triangle Technikon	Vaal University of Technology
Cape Technikon	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
Peninsula Technikon	
Technikon Northern Gauteng	Tshwane University of Technology
Technikon North-West	
Technikon Pretoria	
	University of Mpumalanga
	Sol Plaatje University
	Branch Campus Universities
Monash South Africa	Monash South Africa
Regenesys Business School	Regenesys Business School
Stenden University South Africa ²	Stenden University South Africa ²

Source: DHET 2014.

Table 3: Increase in foreign students studying in South Africa.

Source: DHET 2012.

Table 4: South African universities' share of foreign students

Source: DHET 2012.